

not lie in denying children the opportunity for an education. It does not lie in denying American farmers and small business owners willing workers, nor does it lie in exploiting foreign labor to disadvantage American workers. And the answer does not lie in raiding workplace after workplace, tearing apart families, or building walls along our borders.

THE MATTHEW SHEPARD ACT OF 2007

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I wish to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor on many occasions to highlight a separate violent, hate-motivated crime that has occurred in our country.

On the evening of August 9, 2008, 24-year-old Michael Roike was leaving the Playbill Cafe a Washington, DC, area bar with three of his friends when they noticed an SUV parked next door nearby. The SUV carried several men who reportedly spoke with Roike and his friends. The conversation allegedly began casually but escalated when the men from the SUV repeatedly used the word "faggot." One of Roike's friends, Stevon-Christophe Burrell, 29, allegedly became upset and asked the men to leave them alone. In response, a male from the SUV reportedly approached Burrell aggressively. Roike said he stepped between them and tried to diffuse the situation, but Roike recounts that he suddenly felt pain in the left side of his head and hit the ground. Burrell was also struck before the attackers fled back to the vehicle and drove away. While no suspects have been apprehended, the Metropolitan Police Department report lists the attack as a "simple assault," filing it as a hate crime based on sexual orientation.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Matthew Shepard Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

NATO MEMBERSHIP FOR ALBANIA AND CROATIA

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, the NATO Alliance is now considering its third round of post-Cold War enlargement. This will be the smallest of the rounds, with only two countries to consider compared to three in 1999 and seven in 2004. It should also be easiest, since the development of Membership Actions Plans allow NATO significantly more preinvitation interaction with aspirants today than took place

in earlier rounds. Albania and Croatia were formally invited at the April NATO Summit in Bucharest, Romania. Macedonia did not receive an invitation because of its lingering name dispute with Greece, and several European allies were unwilling to go forward with Membership Action Plans for Georgia and Ukraine.

In March of this year, the Helsinki Commission, which I cochair, held a hearing on the prospects for NATO enlargement which included testimony from expert analysts and contributions from the embassies of these five countries. We have also had hearings on the matter in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee which included administration views. It is important for the Senate to act on these protocols quickly so that ratification by all NATO countries can be completed in a timely matter.

Turning to the records of the two aspirants, Albania has made tremendous strides since 1991, and the country is solidly committed to Euro-Atlantic integration. This is demonstrated by its contribution to numerous peace operations around the world. There are concerns about organized crime and official corruption in Albania, but I believe the country is well aware of these concerns and is continuing to undertake efforts to address them. The country is also aware of the need for further electoral reform before parliamentary elections next June.

Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Dan Fried credibly asserted before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "countries continue reforms rather than abandon them, when they join the alliance," and this particularly applies to Albania given its ongoing EU aspirations. In that spirit, I want to express my support for Albania's NATO membership, which will strengthen the alliance as well as the prospects for further reform in Albania.

Croatia is clearly ready for NATO membership. Its democratic credentials are very strong. Recovering from the violent breakup of Yugoslavia, the country essentially shed its extreme nationalist leanings in 2000 and has been in rapid transition ever since. Croatia is also preparing for EU membership, boosting reform efforts, and it has become an increasingly active and helpful player in world affairs. I therefore want to express my strong support for Croatia's NATO membership as well.

CMS CERTIFICATIONS OF HRSA RURAL HEALTH CLINIC DESIGNATIONS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, yesterday we passed the Health Care Safety Net Act, which reauthorizes multiple programs within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, HELP. This bill does include one section that changes the timeframe for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, CMS,

to certify rural health clinic, RHC, shortage area designations from 3 years to 4 years. We have worked closely with the chairman and ranking member of the HELP Committee to have language included in H.R. 3343 to align the timeframe for CMS certifications of rural health clinic designations with the timeframe for HRSA designations. This provision is crucial to maintaining access to primary care and other necessary medical services in rural areas. I know that several rural health clinics in Montana would be forced to close their doors if the CMS rule were permitted to go forth. I am proud to stand with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure that these important parts of our health care delivery system are protected.

We are most appreciative of the efforts of the HELP Committee to include this language at our request. As chairman of the Finance Committee, I am obligated to point out for the record that Medicare is exclusively governed by title XVIII of the Social Security Act, which is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Finance Committee. Inclusion of these Medicare provisions in H.R. 3343 does not represent any waiver of the Finance Committee's jurisdiction on this subject. In the absence of the Chairman of the HELP Committee, Senator KENNEDY, I would ask the distinguished ranking member, Senator ENZI, to acknowledge that Medicare is governed by title XVIII of the Social Security Act and is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Finance Committee. Again, I would like to extend our thanks to the chairman and ranking member of the HELP Committee for graciously agreeing to our request to include this language in H.R. 3343.

Mr. ENZI. It is a great pleasure to work with my distinguished colleagues on H.R. 3343, the Health Care Safety Net Act. The Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions has a long and distinguished history of championing legislation improving our health care system. Reauthorization of the health center program, the National Health Service Corps, rural health care programs, and dental workforce programs are a handful of examples of the successful programs the HELP Committee governs. I have had the pleasure of working with Senators KENNEDY and HATCH on this bill, and I very much appreciate the work of Senators SMITH, BARRASSO, ROBERTS, and the other sponsors of S. 3367, which was the genesis of the rural health clinic provision included in this bill. I also sincerely appreciate the contributions of Senators BAUCUS and GRASSLEY, as the rural health provision is under the jurisdiction of the Finance Committee. I look forward to strengthening our relationship next year as our two great committees work together on health care reform, and I am pleased the passage of this bill puts us one step closer to a higher quality health care system.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I agree with my colleague, Chairman BAUCUS, and would